

C2 2. (twice amended) The system of claim 1 further defined by means for forwarding to the user only those document titles compatible with the authorized access of the user, wherein document[s] titles that are not compatible with the authorized access of the user are not forwarded to the user thereby preventing the user from discovering the existence of said document titles through the use of the search engine.

C3 4. (three times amended) A method of document retrieval in a network environment having web sites where documents are stored with a plurality of access levels and query servers where document searches are launched comprising,

executing a query on a query server having access to a document index of documents available for searching on document servers provided in the web site by a person having a unique identification code without regard to access control limitations, yielding a list of all relevant documents, each document having a unique URL,

reviewing all URLs by the document servers after the search is executed using an access control list associated with each document server to check whether each URL is compatible with the access level of the identification code of the person executing the query, [and]

delivering only those [documents whose] URLs that are [is] compatible with the access level of the person, wherein each URL that is not compatible with the access level of the person is withheld, and

preventing the person from discovering the URLs that are not compatible with the access level of the person.

Remarks

In the above referenced Office action, claims 1-8 & 11-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable by DuFresne (U.S. Patent No. 5,835,712). This is a new basis for rejection. Applicant notes that the After Final Amendment filed on April 14, 2000 was entered, and the

Examiner has considered the arguments submitted therewith moot. Applicant hereby submits the following remarks, which are intended to address the new grounds for rejection.

DuFresne describes a system and a method for retrieving document templates by a client from a server. Under DuFresne, a client requests a specific document template. The request is reviewed by the server with an access control list, and the document template is delivered to the client if the client has rights appropriate to the document template. Pursuant to DuFresne, the client knows of the existence of a particular document template and only seeks to retrieve it from the server. There is no searching involved or contemplated by the DuFresne patent.

In stark contrast, the present invention employs a search engine to search for particular document aspects among a plurality of documents. The user does not have a particular document in mind, only a set of attributes that are entered into a search engine. The search engine then combs the documents on the server looking for attributes that would be compatible to the search request. Furthermore, a server may contain documents of varying security levels, with users assigned rights that may or may not be compatible with some or all of the documents contained on the server. Moreover, a search engine has the capability of searching a plurality of document servers, regardless of whether the document servers are contained in the same domain. Therefore, the client can search a broad array of document servers for documents that match the client's particular criteria.

The search engine is an important aspect of the present invention. Generally, once a search is executed, the results are returned to the client. In the present invention the results are screened by an access control list on the server to determine whether the user has the proper security clearance for all of the documents returned by the search. Those documents, and document titles, that are not compatible with the access level of the person executing the search are not returned to that person. This is a very important aspect of the invention. As the user is looking for document

properties, rather than particular documents, the user will not discover the existence of particular documents for which the user does not have access.

Denying the existence of documents is an important security precaution. If a user does not know that a document exists, it is less likely that the user will use other measures to obtain said document. The access control list of DuFresne merely denies access to a particular document, as it does not prevent the user from discovering the existence of said document. Under DuFresne, the user could use alternative means to unlock access to a document to which access was denied. A known document to which a user does not have access might serve to frustrate that user and induce the user to seek alternative access. In contrast, the user of the present invention would never even know that particular documents were filtered by the access control list. The user would assume that the search results represented all of the relevant document titles, and proceed accordingly.

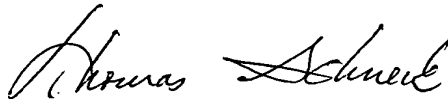
The Applicant believes that the remarks submitted in response to the previous Office Actions sufficiently differentiate the disclosed invention from the prior art. Therefore, the Applicant hereby incorporates the all of the remarks previously filed in this response. In view of the amendments and remarks made herein, Applicant requests consideration of the claims as amended. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Asst. Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231

Signed: Sally Azevedo
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Respectfully submitted,



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